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SUBJECT: NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC ALLIANCE AND GOVERNMENT OF
SUDAN SIGN PEACE AGREEMENT

REF: CAIRO 4360

Sensitive but unclassified. Please protect accordingly.

1. (U) Summary: Officials representing the Government of Sudan (GOS) and the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) signed a peace agreement on June 18 in Cairo potentially paving the way for the NDA to participate in the Sudanese Unity Government, scheduled to be formed by July 9, 2005. The "Cairo Agreement for National Reconciliation and Comprehensive Peace in Sudan" provides for the formation of a joint committee to supervise the implementation of the agreement. Despite the signing, key issues remain unresolved. End summary.

2. (U) The joint committee will consist of legal, political and grievance subcommittees, which will consider how NDA views might be incorporated into the new government. The agreed-upon subcommittees will reportedly explore ways to strengthen the process of democratization in Sudan by means such as lifting the State of Emergency, canceling laws that limit freedom, and enacting new laws to enhance the independence of the judiciary. Although the subcommittees' precise objectives and strategies remain to be defined, both NDA and GOS officials were publicly optimistic following the signing ceremony about the prospects for greater cooperation.

3. (SBU) Nonetheless, key issues remain unresolved. NDA vice chairman General Abdel Rahman Saeed told poloff on June 20 that the parties had failed to resolve both the disposition of NDA-affiliated forces and the proportionate representation by NDA parties in interim government institutions. The NDA seeks to have its forces merged with the Sudanese Army. As for the proportionate share of power, Saeed said that the NDA would like the opposition to have at least 20 percent representation in government institutions. Saeed added that 14 percent should be reserved for the NDA parties alone. According to the terms of the June 18 agreement, unless the parties resolve these two matters, the overall agreement will not take effect.

4. (SBU) However, according to Saeed, the two unresolved issues "would not keep (the NDA) from working with the government." In that vein, the General noted that the parties had reached a "significant breakthrough" concerning NDA representation on the committee responsible for drafting the new constitution. The GOS had initially offered the NDA only six seats (out of a total of 60) on the drafting committee, but later increased the number to nine, a number satisfactory to the NDA. Saeed said that the NDA's team of nine delegates would leave for Khartoum on June 20 or 21 to join the constitutional drafting process.

5. (SBU) The Government of Egypt (GOE) continues to be involved in supporting efforts to achieve peace in Sudan. In addition to hosting this last round of GOS-NDA negotiations, the GOE, according to the Ministry of Defense, is planning to send 800 troops to join peace-keeping missions in Sudan by the end of June.

6. Khartoum minimize considered.

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GRAY